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Acting Secretary

To: Community College Presidents
           Brad Phillips, Ph.D., Executive Director, Maryland Association of Community Colleges
           Leanne Allen, Chair, MCCACET Affinity Group
           Dr. Christy Dryer, Chair, M4CAO Affinity Group
           Ekaterina Sule, Chair, MCCRG Affinity Group

From: Sanjay Rai, Ph.D., Acting Secretary, MHEC

CC: Emily A. A. Dow, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary, Academic Affairs, MHEC
           Parris Jackson, Office of Information Technology, MHEC
           Barbara Schmertz, Ph.D., Director, Office of Research and Policy Analysis, MHEC
           Ann Kellogg, Ph.D., Director of Reporting Services, MHEC

Subject: Workforce Training Registration System Data Collection

Date: December 6, 2023

In 2020, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), in partnership with representatives from Maryland's community colleges, developed the first noncredit workforce training unit record data collection. This collection, the Noncredit Workforce Completers System (NWCS), was developed to capture students who complete a course or series of courses that qualifies students for identifiable occupations or that provides a comprehensive body of knowledge leading to career advancement. This completer collection, now in its third cycle of data collection, has proven to be a valuable addition to the MHEC data collections. Through newly launched dashboards, the NWCS collection highlights the important contributions the community colleges are making to the education of Maryland's citizens and the state's workforce. These data are also shared with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center, (MLDSC), and through that agency, the data are linked with data from other state agencies to study statewide policy initiatives, including the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future.*

In 2021, MHEC, along with MLDSC, was invited by the Maryland Department of Labor to partner on a U. S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant. The purpose of the grant is to strengthen the connection between workforce data and education data. This grant allows MHEC to again partner with Maryland's community colleges to build on the NWCS and develop a new collection that focuses more broadly on noncredit workforce training.

In February 2023, MHEC reached out to community colleges to identify participants to form a workgroup to guide the development of this new collection. A workgroup was formed with representatives from seven community colleges and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (see roster below). The workgroup was comprised of staff from the each college's institutional research offices and workforce development programs as well as staff from MHEC and MACC (see roster at end) so that the data collection could be developed collaboratively between individuals with expertise in workforce training, individuals charged with pulling data to fulfill the collection requirements, and those who ultimately use the data for research purposes.   Between April 2023 and November 2023 this workgroup met to develop

population reporting requirements, data elements, and additional collection guidance. As a result, MHEC is excited to announce that this new data collection is ready to pilot.

The Workforce Training Registration System (WTRS) Pilot

I write to extend the opportunity to all community colleges to participate in the pilot for this new collection. Six community colleges from the workgroup (Carroll Community College, College of Southern Maryland, Community College of Baltimore County, Frederick Community College, Harford Community College and Howard Community College) have made initial commitments to serve as pilot institutions, but we hope to expand that participation to non-workgroup colleges. The addition of non-work group colleges to the pilot is critical in vetting the file specifications and data definitions developed by the workgroup. As with the NWCS collection, MHEC has prepared the file specifications and submission plan to allow institutions to participate in the pilot even if they are not able to provide all data elements. Participation in the pilot provides a valuable opportunity for institutions to "practice" their data extraction and reporting for this new collection in advance of meeting the annual reporting requirement.

The timeframe for the pilot is as follows:

- December 8, 2023: Pilot material posted to MHEC's [Secure Data Web](#)
- December 20, 2023: Deadline for institutions to commit to pilot
- March 29, 2024: Institution submits pilot data to MHEC for students taking courses between July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023
- April 2024-May 2024: Data validation and resubmission cycle
- June 2024: Revision of all collection materials

Robust participation is our aim. We hope as many institutions take advantage of participating in the pilot as possible. **Institutions interested in participating in the pilot must email mac2help.mhec@maryland.gov and ann.kellogg@maryland.gov by December 20th to confirm their participation.** This includes the six institutions in the workgroup (Carroll Community College, College of Southern Maryland, Community College of Baltimore County, Frederick Community College, Harford Community College and Howard Community College) that indicated their intent to participate in the pilot.

Institutions with questions about the pilot can contact Ann Kellogg at ann.kellogg@maryland.gov.

We are excited to move forward with this additional collection, one that can more fully tell the story of the educational opportunities at our Maryland community colleges. If the resulting pilot in March 2024 is successful, we will ask all community colleges to participate in this new collection, which will launch with the 2024-2025 collection cycle, with the first WTRS filing being submitted to MHEC in November of 2024.

Workforce Training Registration System (WTRS) Workgroup Members:

Institutional Research Offices:

- Yonas Berhane, Associate Director of Institutional Research and Organizational Development, Howard Community College
- Heidi Barth, Director, Institutional Research, Community College of Baltimore County
- Naomi Owusu, Reporting & Data Management Specialist, Cecil College
- Ann DeLawder, Data Analyst for Academic Ops of Operations & Special Initiatives, Harford Community College

Workforce Training Programs:

- Kate McClave, Operations Associate of Budgeting, Schedule & Registration, Harford Community College
- Joyce Thompson, College of Southern Maryland
- Brenda Steele, Assistant Director, CEWD Operations - Continuing Education and Workforce Dev. - TLSS, Frederick Community College
- Jessica Benedict, CRM Manager, Community College of Baltimore County

Maryland Association of Community Colleges:

- Jean Marriott, Data Analyst, Maryland Association of Community Colleges

Maryland Higher Education Commission:

- Emily A.A. Dow, Assistant Secretary for Academic Affairs
- Parris Jackson, Director, Office of Information Technology
- Barbara Schmertz, Director, Research and Policy Analysis
- Ann Kellogg, Director of Reporting Services, MHEC/MLDS